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RHMFSS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFSS/USNMR SHAPE BE
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000593

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL MNUC MOPS NATO RS

SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA: NUCLEAR EXPERTS CAUTIOUS ABOUT POSSIBLE NRC EXERCISE INVOLVING AN IMPROVISED NUCLEAR DEVICE

REF: DAILEY-SPARKES EMAIL 12/17/09

Classified By: Charge John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) On December 17, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Nuclear Experts considered a proposed table top exercise (TTX) involving a response to an improvised nuclear device (IND) in ¶2010. The Chair proposed that the TTX could be a stand alone event or serve as an initial planning conference for a follow-on field training exercise (FTX) in late 2010 or early ¶2011. The Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany had offered to host the TTX. NRC representatives did not have instructions, but offered opinions regarding the proposed exercise. The Russian rep thought it useful to use the TTX as a planning conference for a future live exercise, whereas the French rep said that the TTX might be acceptable, but not as a planning exercise for a FTX. Any TTX should be followed by an assessment before a future FTX was considered. Per instructions, the U.S. rep explained that Washington was still considering potential U.S. participation in any exercise (ref).

¶2. (C) Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy identified problems with the proposed TTX scenario based upon the likely national response to an explosion of a non-state IND. They explained that in their countries local governments would have the lead in responding to such an event and federal response would come primarily from interior and environment ministries rather than defense ministries, creating difficulty getting experts from capitals for a NRC exercise. Furthermore, the German rep pointed out that if this was a NATO event it would be dealt with by the NATO Senior Defense Group on Proliferation and the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee rather than a nuclear experts committee.

¶3. (C) In conclusion, the Chair explained that the proposal for the TTX would be reworked and distributed in advance of the next NRC Nuclear Experts meeting on January 22, 2010. The Chair inaccurately characterized the committee as supporting the TTX as a precursor to a follow-on FTX, prompting the U.S. rep to reiterate that the U.S. had not agreed to any exercises at this stage and was awaiting further guidance from Washington.

HEFFERN